

## keep holding my hand (so we don't get separated) by lumaxies

**Category:** IT (Movies - Muschietti), IT - Stephen King

**Genre:** M/M, Nonbinary Stanley Uris, who is gonna check me., yes  
this is based off the old finale of sabrina

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Eddie Kaspbrak

**Relationships:** Mike Hanlon/Stamley Uris, Richie Tozier/Stamley Uris

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2019-12-03

**Updated:** 2019-12-03

**Packaged:** 2019-12-18 03:38:59

**Rating:** General Audiences

**Warnings:** No Archive Warnings Apply

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 3,236

**Publisher:** archiveofourown.org

**Summary:**

The ancient story of the four-armed, four-legged, two-headed person, Stanley would like to clarify, is not true. They don't know exactly where the story got all twisted up and freakishly incorrect, but it did, which really is more of an annoyance than an inconvenience, but still manages to grind their gears. Of course, the idea of soulmates is true, and the notion of soulmates being split is also true, though the real story is much less interesting, and not very many people know it. Stan is one of the lucky ones who do.

## **keep holding my hand (so we don't get separated)**

The ancient story of the four-armed, four-legged, two-headed person, Stanley would like to clarify, is not true. They don't know exactly where the story got all twisted up and freakishly incorrect, but it did, which really is more of an annoyance than an inconvenience, but still manages to grind their gears. Of course, the idea of soulmates is true, and the notion of soulmates being split is also true, though the real story is much less interesting, and not very many people know it. Stan is one of the lucky ones who do.

Their luck comes with being the sole descendant of the Uris line, the most powerful family in the magical world. Their lineage makes them privy to many of the secrets of the universe, but without a doubt, the ability to identify their true love with one quick trip through their hall closet is certainly the handiest. However, up until this point, Stan has refused to seek that information out.

Sure, they had seen how their mom and dad had fallen apart because their dad didn't verify that they were soulmates. Sure, it was awful to go through. But, they had also seen the way their mom had become obsessed with soulmates, and how she had ultimately abandoned Stan for her daydreams of a one true love. So, Stan had sworn off The North Star when they were twelve, and decided that any relationships they had would be based on their heart, and not what some freaking pebble had to tell them.

The pebbles, or, Soul Stones, are smooth pieces of glowing rock, that represented the essence of a person's being. The stones were individually cut from perfect circles into two jagged halves at the beginning of time, and no two sets were the same. If two people were soul mates, their stones would slot together perfectly, like puzzle pieces. And, if two halves didn't fit, there wasn't a way to make them- it simply wasn't destiny's plan for them to end up together.

Stan really didn't pay the stones much mind anymore. Granted, when they were younger they had been enamored with them, obsessed with the idea of always being sure if a relationship was meant to last. But then, the great reckoning happened, and Stan realized that they could depend on their feelings- on their heart- a lot more than they

could some rock on a star that was billions and trillions of miles away. Because wasn't that the point? There was no experience gained in keeping their heart locked away for someone they might not even meet until they're eighty-two, and dying. They would much rather open their heart, and experience all the beauty that mortals did with every lifetime- take chances, make mistakes, and find their true love in their own time, on their own terms.

And, they did. They had the typical mortal experience- they dated casually, went steady, and fell head over heels with people that they thought were their endgame, but turned out not to be. Of course, it's not for lack of trying.

Patty had been a sweet girl, and they dated her most of freshman year, but there was the downside of them being gay that put an end to that relationship in March.

There had been middle school Mike Hanlon, a frisbee player and perfect man, who Stan was definitely in love with, but he was dating Bill, so that was out.

But, Richie... well, Richie is Stan's longest relationship to date. They meet on a random Tuesday afternoon when they're eight years old. No big deal. He's trying to figure out how to get a chocolate-chocolate chip muffin, and a lanky brunette is poking incessantly at Eddie. Stan pays them no mind, focusing their efforts on their future lunch endeavors instead.

"Leave me alone," They absently hear Eddie whine. "Can't you go bug someone else? Help Stan get a muffin, or something!"

"Seriously?" Richie looks to them with eyebrows raised. "You can't get your own muffin?"

"I didn't need this extra level of embarrassment today," They tell Eddie shortly, before turning back to the kid standing in front of him. "But, no."

"Great!" Eddie grins. "Stan, this is Richie. Richie, this is Stan. Mark your calendars, people! May 7th, 12:36 p.m. and Richie Tozier is finally leaving me alone!"

And it is something that Stan saves, tucked away in their memory. The two grow inseparable, and for years to come, they always split a chocolate-chocolate chip muffin at 12:36 p.m. on May 7th. They start dating in sophomore year, and last for the rest of high school, before they break up in early June, as the threat of UCLA and Columbia looms right over the tops of their heads.

Richie wants to try long distance. Stan can't make him wait around.

Because they love him, they let him go.

But, all the heartbreak and tears and regret of their past relationships had been worth it. Because they had led up to this single, solitary moment: Stan was getting married in eight hours.

Correction: In seven hours, thirty-seven minutes, and twenty-four seconds, Stan would be married to Mike freaking Hanlon. So, yeah. Their dreams were kind of coming true.

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Stan and Mike both end up at Columbia; Mike, having finally convinced his grandfather to let him move “just for college”, feels like he'd won the lottery. Stan has been expecting this since they were ten and a half. They room together for the sole purpose of having a familiar face around, but nothing happens between them until their junior year, when Richie posts a picture on Instagram of him and a leggy blonde named Sandy, and Stan gets wine drunk to cope. They practically jump Mike when he walks in the room, and the next thing they know, they're together, and it feels good.

Mike proposes on their two-year anniversary and it's sweepingly romantic. Stan accepts without a second thought, and their friends immediately shift into wedding planning mode. Stan hardly has to do anything- save for reminding Bev that, for the love of all that is sacred, they are Jewish, so they will not be married in a Presbyterian church. In fact, they're not even sure what a Presbyterian is.

Mike is sweet and agreeable, and doesn't argue about any of it. Stan loves it about him, but they can't help but miss the nagging voice of the boy who would have read their mind, and given them the

wedding they didn't even know they had always wanted.

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Stan wakes up on the day of the wedding and feels no different than usual. Okay, maybe a little stirring in their stomach, a slight chill, maybe some mild trouble breathing, but otherwise, no different.

"How are you feeling?" Ben asks when she wakes them up.

"Excited, delighted, overjoyed!" Stan grins. "I'm getting married!"

"You sure?" Ben looks at them skeptically. "I'm thinking more... nervous? Tense? Worried?"

"Why would you think that?" Stan gives her a dismissive look.

Ben pulls their blanket back, to reveal the literal ice cubes that are their feet. Stan shrieks in surprise, and Ben looks at them triumphantly.

"Stan, I think you might be getting cold feet."

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"I'm not freaking out!" Stan exclaims to Ben, Eddie, and Bev, who are currently at the end of the bed, helping them chip away the ice at their feet.

"Well, your feet are telling me otherwise," Ben says gently. "What's going on, Stan? I haven't seen you get like this over a boy in a really long time."

"I love Mike, you guys," Stan plucks off the last bit of ice on their left foot, and pulls a sock over it immediately, in a lame attempt to warm it up. "He's charming and sweet, and he treats me well."

"So, why are you all nervous?" Bev asks him seriously.

"I don't know if I love him enough to marry him," Stan whispers. "I just am really unsure, because what if he's not my soulmate, and then I end up like my mom?"

"Does it really matter?" Ben asks, swinging an arm around their shoulder as she scoots up the bed to sit on his left.

"I want to say no," Stan bites their lip. "But maybe it does."

"Stan, the only thing that you can do is try to make each other happy. There are no guarantees in life- not even soulmates."

"I just don't want to have any doubts," Stan says tepidly. "I want to be sure that I'm not making a huge mistake."

"Well, I can help with that," Bev announces, and she snaps her fingers, then disappears.

"Me too," Eddie says warmly, and he's gone just as fast as Bev, with a mere point of his finger.

"Great," Stan moans, as a knock sounds at their door. They stand, pull on their robe, and trudge down the stairs, Ben following closely behind. They swing the door open and look in shock at the person standing on his porch.

"Mom?"

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Bev arrives at Richie's within a second or two and plops down onto his couch as he turns to her in surprise. She gives him a wink and a wave, crossing her legs.

"Bev?" He asks in disbelief. "What the hell are you doing here?"

"Why aren't you going to Stan's wedding?" She asks instead, hoping she can make her point quickly and be on time for the wedding.

"It's...complicated." He tells her awkwardly, stepping toward her, and shoving his hands in the pockets of his faded jeans.

"Doesn't seem that complicated to me." She shrugs.

"Bev," Richie looks at her, and for the first time, she sees genuine broken-heartedness in his eyes. "I can't go to that wedding because

I'm still in love with Stan."

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"Duckie!" Stan's mom lets herself in, stopping to hug Stan passively and press an air kiss to their cheek.

"Mom, what are you doing here?"

"I think every mother wants to go to their only child's wedding, baby."

"How did you even-" Stan shakes their head. "Did Dad invite you? Rabbi?"

"No," Their mom bops their nose with one finger. "I heard about it online!"

Stan shot a look back at Ben, who flushed and looked at the ground sheepishly. She had asked Stan and Mike to model for some pictures a few months ago. They had ended up on her Instagram and gone a little viral. That must be how their mom found out.

"Mom, I haven't seen you in years," Stan says bluntly. "Why are you really here?"

The smile falls from their mother's face. She steps towards them, smoothing out her pencil skirt.

"I need to make sure you're not making a huge mistake," She says earnestly. "This boy- are you sure about him?"

"Of course, they're sure!" Ben cuts in indignantly. Upon seeing Stan's hesitant expression, her face falls. "You are sure... right?"

"I thought I was!" Stan cries. "But I woke up with cold feet, and now my mom is here, and I don't know what to think!"

"Maybe I can help with that!" Eddie's tone is optimistic as he pops in alongside Bev. "I have something for you."

He holds out his hand expectantly, and Stan nervously looks down.

“My soul stone,” They breathe. “You went to the North Star for me?”

“Course!” Eddie exclaims. “That’s yours and Mike’s, by the way,” Eddie presents his other hand. “So you can see if they fit!”

Stan takes the pieces anxiously, their friends and their mother crowding around him. He connects the two pieces tepidly.

“Stan...” Ben wraps a sympathetic arm around their shoulder. Stan begins to weep.

“What am I supposed to say now?” They wail. On the stones, the moving images of Stan and Mike’s essences don’t quite connect. “Am I supposed to just show up to this wedding, knowing that Mike and I aren’t meant to be?”

“Stan, just because he’s not your soulmate doesn’t mean you can’t be happy with him.” Bev points out.

“I know,” Stan snuffles. “And I am. Happy with him. I just... I don’t want to waste my forever on a relationship with no real chance in the grand scheme of things.”

“So what are you going to do?” Eddie asks concernedly.

“I don’t know.”

No one sees Bev silently slip out the door.

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Richie picks up the rock and examines it, turning it slowly in his hand. The box it came in was dainty, a tiny teal thing with a white ribbon tied neatly around it, placed carefully on the seat of his motorcycle. If he thought about it, it almost looked like...

“A wedding present,” He whispered, picking the box up from its place on the seat of his motorcycle, and looking inside. Sure enough, there was a note folded into a tiny square still inside, with his name on the front. He pulled it out and began to read.

Rich- I hope you’re reading this before it’s too late. Don’t say I never



did anything for you. - Bev

Richie stared at the note in confusion, flipping it over to find a lined paper attached to the back with a staple.

Richard Wentworth Tozier, it read, in Stan's neat script. I am writing this letter to you at 12:36 a.m. on the day of our high school graduation. Soon, you will be on a plane to Los Angeles, and I'll be making my way to Columbia, as we embark on the next big adventure in our lives. Rich, I have to tell you that I am scared out of my mind. I am afraid to graduate and move on from these people that I've known my whole life, and I'm nervous that once you leave me it will be forever.

I don't know how to put into words all the things that are rattling around in my brain, but I can tell you one thing that's weighing heavy at the front: I love you. In a really massive way, that makes me feel like I would follow you anywhere if you asked. I know you never would, but if you had told me to apply to UCLA, I would have. I love you, and I never want to lose you. But because I love you so much, I know I have to let you go. Because California is your dream, and you have to be free to go where you need to and do what you want to, without a tie holding you back. But, even though we're going in different directions right now, I like to think that you and I will find our way back to each other. Just like we always have.

It's been three really long years with you, and I don't regret any of them. Not a single day. You are the love of my life. I know you are. This is something that I hold in great regard, but that doesn't mean that I won't forget it one day. If I do, fight for me. Don't let me make the idiot mistake of letting you go forever.

I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you. - Stan the Man

Richie didn't notice he was crying until his tears began to hit the paper. He swiped at his eyes quickly, and turned back to his bike, starting it up and speeding away.

He had a wedding to crash.

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Stan stands outside the doors to the sanctuary, pacing back and forth.

“What’s going on?” Mike asks them, walking out from the glistening room. “I’m sensing a little hesitation on your part.”

“Mike,” Stan enfolds himself in Mike’s arms, lingering for just a moment before they pull away. “You are such a wonderful guy.”

“But,” Mike nods knowingly. “We’re not two halves of a whole.”

“How did you-?”

“Stan, all I want is for you to be happy,” Mike tells them honestly, reaching for their hand. He places a small kiss on it, then drops it. “If we’re not soulmates, maybe we shouldn’t be doing this.”

“Mike, I am so sorry.” Stan’s voice is earnest as they apologize, tears now flowing down their cheeks.

“Don’t be,” Mike shakes his head dismissively, and kisses both of their cheeks, then cradles their head in his hands. “Never think that almost is good enough for you.”

“Or for you,” Stan whispers. Mike gives them a sad smile, places a kiss on their forehead, and walks away, leaving Stan to tell the guests about the cancellation.

“Okay, well, that about concludes today’s festivities,” They enter swiftly and emotionlessly, giving a forced smile to his friends and family. “Though, I do have about three hundred pounds of bagels and lox across town that you’re all welcome to.” They clap once, meets Bev’s eye, and allows their resolve to crumble. “So, uh, thanks for coming.”

Stan keeps their head down as they rush out of the synagogue, avoiding what they knew were shocked and devastated looks from their family and friends. They take a moment to compose themselves on the steps of the church, wiping furiously at their eyes, and blinking incessantly. When they turn, they notice, like a scene straight out of some ABC Family classic.

“Rich?”

And there he is, in all his glory. The love of his freaking life, the one that got away, the inspiration behind every shitty love poem they’ve ever written.

“I don’t know what this is,” Richie gives them a small smile, and fidgets with the item in his hand. Stan strains to get a better look and freeze when they realize what it is. “But something tells me I’ll find the answer here.”

Stan takes their time to answer, admiring Richie in all the ways they hadn’t gotten a chance to since they broke up. “And I think I just found mine.”

Richie grins at them, as Stan pulses forward, running straight to their soulmate and throwing himself into his arms. Stan presses their lips against Richie’s fervently, their arms winding up around his neck, all too aware of the soft pressure against their back as Richie pulls them close. They kiss like they have a million things to say, and none of the words to say it. Instead, the kiss says it all- years of wondering, explanations, and an answer to the most important question: the love they had for each other hasn’t gone away.

Richie pulls away first, nuzzling his nose against Stan’s and keeping their foreheads pressed together. Stan smiles at him, and pecks his nose, which makes Richie grin, and lift them into the air, spinning them around like something out of the movies. But this is better than the movies, Stan thinks, because this is real, and it’s mine. To have and to hold.

Stan climbs on the back of Richie’s motorcycle (Seriously, a motorcycle? Who is this Stan and what did they do with the real one?), and wraps their arms around Richie, hanging on for dear life as they speed away from the church, waving to the wedding guests as they leave.

On the pavement, reflecting the sunlight, lay a perfectly circular stone. Its image had disappeared as the boys drove away, but when Bev held it in her hand, she knew.

She glances at her watch and smiles to herself. 12:36 on the dot.

**Author's Note:**

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